

SPIES AND THE PROPER ROLE OF THE CIA

SPY or fantastic fraud, one Ivan Asen Christof Georgiev has brought the U. S. Central Intelligence agency into the reluctant forefront of the news once more. Georgiev claims that he collected \$200,000 for selling secrets to the United States while he was serving as the No. 2 representative of Communist Bulgaria at the United Nations. As usual in such episodes, the hush-hush has no greater comment. But the government in Washington has protested anti-American demonstrations in Sofia & Bulgaria and demanded payment for damage caused at the legation there.

In confessing that he spied to earn money to maintain mistresses on two continents, Georgiev is reported to have asked his government for maximum punishment—death by a firing squad. Irrational as such behavior appears to Western minds, Communists in both Russia and its European satellites have been known to go into court and demand a death sentence for self-admitted crimes. They may have been drugged, brainwashed or simply led to hope for a lighter penalty by requesting execution.

If Georgiev really was a CIA agent, he belonged to a small army of international spies whose activities rarely come to the surface. Of course the United States employs espionage agents of foreign nationality. So does every other important country, including the Soviet Union.

Assuming Georgiev's story is true, a natural question occurs: Of what value to the powerful United States is a traitor from a backward Balkan state of 8 million population? It is conceivable that he was able to furnish military, political and economic information on the entire Communist satellite bloc. He may even have been privy to some of Moscow's secrets that American intelligence coveted. If so, it was a standard arrangement under the shadowy code of international espionage.

THE CIA exists today because of Pearl Harbor. That disaster taught the permanent lesson that a nation with the responsibilities and power the United States possesses must never again be caught with its defenses sleeping. The National Security act of 1947 assigns three duties to the CIA:

- To advise the National Security council on intelligence activities.
- To co-ordinate and evaluate the flow of information to the President and other policymakers.
- To perform "services of common concern for the benefit of existing intelligence agencies."

As an aid to officials who have the responsibility for national policymaking, there can be no question of the CIA's legitimate function. It is only when the CIA becomes operational and appears to make itself a policymaking arm of the government that its purpose can be seri-

ously questioned. Last Sunday Harry S. Truman wrote in The Star that, to avoid "complications and embarrassments," the CIA's operational duties should be ended or properly used elsewhere. This view raises questions of fact. Both President Johnson and Congress are responsible for keeping the CIA in its proper role.

As for the Georgiev case, the activities described would be in line with the legitimate function of the CIA. If Georgiev actually took on the ultimate risks of spying for the CIA, we hope that he earned whatever he was paid for his secrets. If this comment sounds cold-blooded, remember that espionage is a cold-blooded profession concerned with the life or death of nations.